

GRAMMAR CRIME HOT SHEET #1

If you are caught committing any of the following crimes again, you will suffer dire consequences!!!!!!

#1. Failure to underline book titles.

Titles that should be underlined (or if you have a computer that will italicize) include: books, book-length poems, plays, magazines, pamphlets, published speeches, long musical works, movies, television programs, works of visual art (titles of paintings, statues, etc.), ships, foreign phrases

Titles that should be in quotation marks are: short stories, songs, short poems, articles in magazines, essays, episodes of a television program, chapter titles in a book

Correct examples: book: *Siddhartha* short story: "Little Red Riding Hood"

short poem: "Ozymandias" long poem: *The Song of Roland* movie: *Schindler's List*

Note: Do not underline or use quotations marks around your own title on own essays or short stories.

#2. Ending sentences with the wrong comparison

Never, never, never write: *I am taller than him.*

The correct way: *I am taller than he is.*

The correct way: *I am taller than he.* (this doesn't sound correct, but it is proper English.)

Correct example: *He is stronger than I am. He is stronger than she is. He is stronger than they are. He is a stronger than you are.*

#3. Illicit use of the word like.

Avoid the use of the word *like* at all costs when you are using it to cite examples.

Replace *like* with *such as*, *for example*, *for instance*.

#4. Use of forbidden, boring, informal words.

From now on, these words are forbidden in formal writing in this classroom:

a lot, all right, stuff, well, so, gonna, wanna, kinda

(of course, the last three words can be used in their correct format: *going to, want to, kind of*)

#5. Incorrect spelling.

These words are commonly misspelled at this school:

beginning, choose, chose, loose, lose, separate, definite, grammar, acquire, heroes, sophomore would've or would have (not would of), could've, should've, because ('cause), until ('til)

#6. Improper matching of THEY to THEIR, and HE/SHE to HIS/HER.

If the beginning of the sentence says: The mother wanted to make the boy happy,

Then the rest should say: so *she* gave *her* favorite old toy to *him*.

Make sure the descriptive words *their, his, her* refer back to the correct subject.

If the subject is a single thing (such as a thing, a person, etc.) then don't use *their*.

#7. Inconsistent use of verb tenses.

When describing characters and plot in literature, use present tense.

Example: Odysseus *plays* a trick on the Cyclops that *results* in the escape of his men from the cave.

When writing fiction, the majority of the time, use past tense. Do not switch back and forth between present and past tense.

#8. Mixing up THIS, THAT, and WHO.

Never say: There was this boy and this tree...

Correct example: There was a boy and a tree...

Only use *this* when the thing is right there in front of you.

Never say: The story is about a young boy *that* loves a tree.

Use *who* when referring to people. The boy is a person, so the sentence should read:

Correct example: The story is about a young boy *who* loves a tree.

Use *that* for objects and things, not people.

GRAMMAR CRIME HOT SHEET #2

If you are caught committing any of the following crimes again, you will suffer dire consequences!!!!!!

#9. Illegal use of IT'S and ITS.

Correct examples: *It's* the right thing to do. (contraction for "it is")

The building cast *its* shadow.

(the shadow belongs to the building, so *its* is a possessive, and doesn't use an apostrophe! Most other possessives use an apostrophe: John's book, Jose's shoe)

#10. Illegal use of YOUR and YOU'RE.

Everyone spells these alike because they sound alike. BEWARE!!!!

Correct examples: *You're* almost ready to try it alone. (contraction for "you are")

Here is *your* paper. (*your* is a possessive, the paper belongs to you)

#11. Illegal use of THEIR and THERE and THEY'RE.

Three more words that everyone spells the same because they sound the same.

Correct examples: *There* is another door over *there*. (shows location or existence).

Their ice cream cones are melting all over *their* shoes. (possessive)

They're not really ready to go yet. (contraction for "they are")

Set an alarm in your brain that goes off every time you are about to use one of these words, and make sure to stop and check that you are using the correct form before you go on.

#12. Illegal use of S / Illegal use of the APOSTROPHE.

An *s* is put at the end of a word for two reasons: to make it plural, or to show possession.

Correct examples: PLURALS: books, students POSSESSION: the book's pages, the student's desk

When you add an s to make something plural, DO NOT USE an apostrophe. (Note: the only exception is shown in Grammar Crime #9 above.)

#13. Illegal use of TO, TOO, and TWO.

Use *too* when you are exaggerating...example: It was *too* much!

Too can also mean *also*...example: I want to go *too*!

Two means the numeral 2.

Correct example: I want *to* go *too* so I can buy *two* pieces of candy.

#14. Random acts of capitalization and cosmetic commas.

There are rules for using capital letters: at the beginning of sentences, for proper nouns, the letter I as a subject, and in direct address. (Direct address: "Hi, Mom!"; otherwise, "I love my mom" doesn't use a capital.)

Correct example: *When I decide I need a ride home from La Jolla High School, Mom, I'll call you.*

There are rules for using commas too. Keep it simple and don't use too many, but make sure you use them after direct address: *Thanks, Mom, I appreciate it.*

#15. Ignoring adverbs.

Adverbs describe actions. Adverbs also describe descriptive words.

But people keep dropping the -ly ending.

Never, never, never write: *He runs slow.*

The correct way: *He runs slowly.*

Never, never, never write: *He is real smart.*

The correct way: *He is really smart.*

#16. Mixing up WILL and CAN, WOULD and COULD.

If you are writing in the present tense, use verbs such as: *are, is, does*, then when you get to a sentence where you want to use the future tense, use *will* or *can*.

If you are writing in the past tense, use verbs such as: *were, was, did*, then when you get to a sentence where you want to use the future tense, use *would* or *could*